

The  
History  
of



ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY.





# HISTORY OF BARTONVILLE, ILLINOIS

*Compiled and Published by*

THE HERITAGE COMMITTEE

*of the*

BARTONVILLE BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

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*This Commission was authorized by an ordinance passed by  
the Bartonville Village Board and Mayor Gerald A. Stuaan.*

## **Foreword**

*Because 1976 is the Bicentennial of our nation, all loyal Americans want to pay homage to our pioneers. This commission has published this book and dedicated it to those who have gone before us, recognizing that without their sacrifices and hardships, our great nation would not be what it is today.*

## **Acknowledgements**

*Many among us have contributed to this book. We are especially indebted to the following who have donated photographs and specific information:*

*Mr. and Mrs. Charles Paschon, Mrs. Hazel Randall, Mr. Stephen Barton, Mrs. Amalia Gerdes Burke, Mrs. Lottie Bruninga, Mr. Art Reidlinger, Alpha Park Library District, Peoria Public Library, Mr. Ken Hinrichs, Bethel Lutheran Church, Bartonville Methodist Church, Bartonville Christian Church, Oak Grove Baptist Church, Trinity Presbyterian Church, St. John Lutheran Church, St. Anthony's Liturgical Center, Bartonville School, Oak Grove School, Monroe School, Limestone High School, Keystone Steel and Wire, Allied Mills, Inc., Johnson Hydraulic Company, Mr. William Luthy, Mr. and Mrs. K. C. Jones, Mr. Ben Taylor, Mrs. Herman Meardy, Eleanore Barton, Peoria Journal Star, Mr. Kenneth Lane, Anna J. Rosenbohm, Wm. Johnson - Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Haller.*

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# CHAPTER I

## *The Beginning*

The first white men to set foot in this area were Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet in 1673, followed by Robert Cavalier, Sieur de LaSalle, who came down the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers by canoe in January, 1680. LaSalle constructed Fort Creve Coeur at the lower end of Peoria Lake, where the river narrows in Tazewell County.

Because this is now the Village of Creve Coeur, which is almost directly across the river from Bartonville, it is entirely possible LaSalle may have walked and explored the site of the present-day Bartonville.

In the year of 1723, when this area was still a part of French America, Philip Francis Renault was successful in obtaining a land grant of one league on the Illinois River, extending back five leagues on the Kickapoo. Renault was interested in the development of mining. While exploring the bluffs along the Kicka-

poo, he found the land to be underlaid abundantly with coal. Some years later, in about 1765, Jean Baptiste Maillet received a grant from the British for 1,400 acres at the mouth of the Kickapoo, which included one mile on the riverfront extending back two miles into the country. It is known that the family of LaVille de Maillet farmed land in the Kickapoo bottoms into the 1780's. Somewhat later, other Frenchmen occupied farms there, namely Simon Roi, Antoine Roi, Hypolite Maillet, Antoine Cicare, and Francis Montplaiser, together with Thomas Forsyth, an American. The Kickapoo, at that time, was called Gatinan (possibly Coteneau). During the War of 1812, these farms were all abandoned when the Village of Peoria was burned.

The first permanent settlers in Limestone Township were Joseph Moffatt and his three sons, Alva, Aquilla, and Benjamin. They settled

there in 1822. The Harker family came in 1829 and settled in the southwest corner of the township, which was called Harkers Corners, near the present location of Lake Camelot. Other early Limestone Township settlers were Henry W. Jones, James Crowe, James Heaton, and Pleasant Hughes. Other settlers who came in the middle of the century were Conrad Bontz, who came in 1844; Christian Straesser and the Hallers in 1847; George Ojeman in 1849; Ed and John Roelf in 1851; and Samuel Ball in 1852. These people were mostly of German descent and planted the first vineyards in the township. Wine was produced from wild grapes before their vineyards reached maturity.

In the year 1850, the people of Peoria County voted to establish a township form of government. "Limestone" was chosen as the name for the township because of the large amount of limestone that could be quarried in the northern part of the township.

Limestone Township can be proud of having two of the first flour mills in the county. George Sharp and John Hamlin erected a mill around 1830 about one-half mile north of the bridge on Highway 116 (Plank Road). This mill was purchased in 1833 by Joshua Aiken and Robert E. Little. They remodelled and enlarged the mill so it was able to grind fifty barrels of flour a day. They also obtained title to one thousand acres of land known as "Horseshoe Bot-

toms". At about the same time, Orin Hamlin and Alva and Aquilla Moffatt erected a dam in the vicinity of Middle Road to build a sawmill. The first timber sawn went into the new courthouse being built in Peoria. At a later date, a flour mill was erected at the same site, which over the years became known as "Monroe's Mill". Nothing remains of this early industry.

The area that is now Bartonville proper has been known by that name since at least 1878, when a Post Office was opened there and named in honor of W. C. H. Barton. The Barton family came to Central Illinois in 1829 and settled in northern Peoria near the Mitchell Sanitarium. In 1850, they came to that part of Limestone Township that is now Bartonville. They first lived in a farmhouse near the present offices of Keystone Steel and Wire Company. In 1868, they moved to what was known as the Barton Mansion at 5416 South Adams Street. This home was occupied by the Bartons continuously until W. W. Barton's death in January, 1958. This house was probably the oldest building in Bartonville, and was razed in 1975 to make room for Interstate 474.

The Bartons were a large and prosperous family and it was fitting that the village would ultimately be named for them. They were large landowners and farmers. Owning all of the rich and fertile bottomlands of the Illinois River and Kickapoo Creek, their holdings were in excess



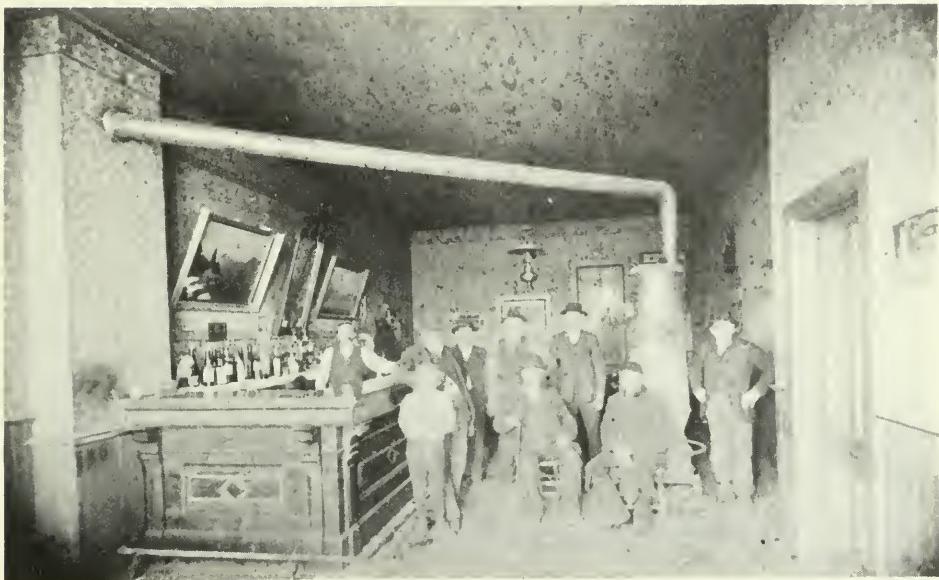
*W. C. H. Barton  
1818 - 1896  
Founder of Bartonville*



*Home of W. C. H. Barton on site of Office of Keystone Steel & Wire*



*Barton Mansion at 5416 S. Adams St.*



*Mike Polson Saloon*

of 1000 acres reaching all the way from South Peoria almost to the Pekin grade. Their many other business enterprises included part interest in the Kickapoo Distillery, saw and grist mills, banking, and serving in township and village government.

Bartonville, in those early days before the turn of the century, was a rowdy place. One early settler described it as being "populated by dogs and drunken miners." Mining was, of course, a hard and dangerous way to make a living. After a hard day in the mines, the young miners would relieve their boredom at the local saloon. There were at least eleven saloons in Bartonville at that time, so

the miners did not have far to go to slake their thirst, gamble, or seek some excitement in their otherwise drab lives. Most of the miners were immigrants, whose place at the bottom of the economic ladder was determined by their lack of education and occupational skills. Scots, Irish, English, and Italians were the nationalities of most of them. The Illinois State Mining publications from those years tell the sad stories of mining accidents, collapsed roofs, explosions, and black damps; these were all the hazards these men had to endure before safety was governed enforced.

Mining was a way of life and the



*Winters Mine*

chief occupation of the small village on the west bank of the Kickapoo Creek from 1723, when Philip Francis Renault received his grant of land from the French Crown, until 1952, when the Greater Peoria Airport Authority purchased the mineral rights to the Mohn Coal Company and closed its shafts forever. Mining in the Bartonville area was not the huge operation that is carried on today in other parts of the country. Some of the mines did ship coal out of the area by railroad or by keelboat to St. Louis, but most of the coal that was dug was consumed locally. Many a householder merely had to go out his back door, dig into the nearest

slope, and uncover a small vein of coal for his own use. Oldtimers claim that the hills around Bartonville are honeycombed with old shafts and drifts, many of which they can point out.

The following table gives the names and opening and closing dates of the most important mines:

Edward Mohn and Son	1919	1952
Treasure Coal Company	1895	1954
Sholls Coal Company #1	1895	unknown
Sholls Coal		

Company #2	unknown	unknown
Wolschlag Coal Company	1895	1925
Brewster and Evans	1915	unknown
Winters Coal Company	1905	1924
Collieries Coop.	1895	1924
Bartonville Coal Company	1898	unknown
Ball Coal Company	1895	1923
Wolland Coal Company	1895	unknown
George Keller	1895	unknown
White Coal Company	1898	unknown
Brown and White	1898	unknown
Lot Hurst	1895	unknown
F. P. Schmidt		
#1	1895	unknown
G. Hurst	1903	unknown
Heitzman Brothers	1907	unknown
Mid-County Coop.	1923	unknown
Brookside Coal Company	1923	unknown
Benhart-Heitzman		
Sam Pye	1919	unknown
Ball-Ricketts-Ball	1921	unknown
Short and Keys	1921	unknown
Hillside Coal Company	1926	unknown
James Ley	1929	unknown
Middle Road Coal Company	1929	unknown

The mining industry in Bartonville encompassed a period from 1895 until 1954. The companies listed were the larger companies; many smaller ones were undoubtedly operating long before 1895. Several of the mines opened and closed more than once; some also changed names after reopening, making the dates very difficult to obtain.



*Hill Mansion  
200 Colona Ave.*

# CHAPTER II

## *The Turn of the Century*

With the coming of the Twentieth Century, Bartonville was still the boisterous mining community that it had always been. The miners still labored in the mines every day and walked to and from work on the muddy streets, still unpaved. Housewives did the family wash on a washboard, carrying water by hand from the well or cistern and heating it on a cookstove. The youngsters attended a school on Coal Hollow Road taught by Simeon Ward. But, there was a change in the air. Acme Harvesting Company was operating on the site that later became Keystone. The Marsden Company, a cellulose plant, had located in Bartonville at a site that would become that of Allied Mills. These new industries offered some diversification, as the village had relied so long on mining and farming.

Upon the hill, the State of Illinois had just finished constructing and

opening the new Illinois Asylum for the Incurably Insane. This hospital was the largest and most modern of its kind.

The most exciting news was the suggestion by some of the community leaders to incorporate. The muddy little mining town wanted to have a government of its own. By a close vote of 114 to 110, the referendum passed and, in 1903, Bartonville was officially on the map. With its new status, it was necessary to elect officials and organize a fire department. The new Village Board appointed Henry R. Gerdes as its first mayor. Mr. Gerdes served for a short term, and then his partner in grocery firm of Gerdes and Barton, W. W. Barton, was elected the new mayor. Mayor Barton served in that capacity for the next eighteen years. During all of Mayor Barton's tenure, the village lived within its income, which was derived primarily from liquor li-



*This home on Roosevelt St. was originally a school moved from Coal Hollow perhaps the oldest building in Bartonville*

censes. No deficit financing or letting of bonds was tolerated, as Mr. Barton was well-known for his thrift in his personal life as well as in village affairs.

Shortly after the advent of the twentieth century, electricity came to Bartonville. Telephone service made its appearance around 1910, although very few families could afford such a luxury at that time. As the years rolled by, Bartonville continued its slow growth. International politics were beginning to be felt locally. War had broken out in Europe and many small-town people across America began to hear of far-off places such as St. Mihiel and Meuse-

Argonne. These places would soon become known first-hand by many sons, fathers, and husbands from Bartonville. Although not much was known about Bartonville's contribution to the Civil War, many local men did serve their nation in World War I.

Following World War I, and with the passage of the Volstead Act, this country entered one of the most tumultuous eras in its history. Bartonville was not spared the trauma of prohibition. There was bootlegging in the area and all the problems that went with it. Almost everyone knew where home-brew and moonshine could be obtained. Many old-timers



*Randall Brickyard*



*Hoffman Blacksmith Shop site of present Municipal parking lot*



*Adams St. at the turn of the century*

look back fondly on those exciting years with a sense of nostalgia. The "great experiment" failed and prohibition was repealed, to be followed by a greater tragedy, the Great Depression.

Progress of any type was minimal or non-existent during those years. It was enough of a struggle to eat and clothe one's self on a regular basis, much less have any money left for improvements. Some men worked a ten to twelve-hour day, seven days a week, for as little as twenty-nine cents an hour, in a local factory. It did no good to complain about such working conditions, because there were several men waiting for every job that was available.

The village government was in the same position as individuals with reduced revenues and high unemploy-

ment. Bartonville had city water of sorts; a main ran down Adams Street to Keystone and Allied Mills, and people living a short distance off Adams Street ran lines to tap on to the main. Those living further away or up on the hills had to rely on wells and cisterns. The water mains were extended to the side streets in 1923. In 1937, during Mayor Stoker's administration, the village was finally served with municipal sewers. Prior to this time, people had privies or drilled sewer drainage lines into the old mines.

One of the worst problems the village faced was washed-out streets. Bartonville was built to a great extent on hills, and every time there was a heavy rain, the streets washed out and the street department had to haul all the gravel and cinders back



*S. B. Winters Home*

up the hill. The first streets to receive blacktop had to be paid by resident contributions, collected by an appointed leader who would go door-to-door soliciting contributions. Residents then took their portions of the assessment to the bank. These first blacktopped streets cost as little as sixty cents per frontage foot.

As the 1930s wore on, the Depression lessened, but War was again beginning in Europe. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the economy was put on a war footing and unemployment diminished. Bartonville citizens, as well as their fellow Americans, had other problems to cope with . . . such as ration books for gasoline, meat, coffee, and shoes. Once

again, the young men went off to war. Bartonville contributed its fair share to the war effort, and many of the men sent did not come home again.

With the ending of the war and with employment at a high level, citizens and the village turned to a better standard of living. Wilbur H. Lauterbach was elected mayor in 1945 and began an aggressive program for the betterment of the village. One of his first goals was a continuation of the street improvement program. Street after street was blacktopped with curbs and gutters until eventually nearly every street was improved. Some of the improvements were paid for with assessments or motor fuel tax funds, or a combination of both.



*Gerdes & Co.*



*Interior Gerdes & Co.*



*Karl Frank Monuments corner of McClure & Adams St.*



*Randall Brickyard*



*Felix Kuhn Butcher Shop*

The street department could now spend its time on meaningful maintenance, rather than having to repair all the hills each time it rained.

Bartonville's first village hall, which was built in 1906 at a cost of \$800.00, was not adequate for a growing population, so in 1954, a new hall was built across the street from the old one. This new white stone structure was large enough to house the police, street, and fire departments, council chamber, village clerk, and mayor's office. The cost of this attractive building was approximately \$60,000.00. About two-thirds of the amount was raised by soliciting local industries and the remainder was paid for from taxes in the general fund.

Since the incorporation in 1903, the Village limits had always been the same. The town was approximately three miles long and one mile wide, the north end being about one-half mile north of the top of Harrison Hill and the south boundary in the vicinity of Allied Mills. The east side ran parallel to the Kickapoo Creek at the north and behind Keystone's Wire Mill on the south. The western limit extended behind the houses on Madison Street. It was realized by the Village Board and Mayor Lauterbach that if Bartonville was to grow and prosper, it had to expand. The first annexation was Monroe Street, which was added to the village by ordinance on December 8, 1949. At this time, Wil-Mar Knolls subdivision was being



*Martin & Tjarks Grocery*

developed and it was annexed on December 28, 1950. In the years following, many other large and small areas were annexed. The largest area was on September 12, 1957, when the State of Illinois consented to the annexation of Peoria State Hospital. Other additions in later years extended the boundaries out as far as Lauterdale and part of Mardell Manor.

## **Bartonville Volunteer Fire Department**

The Bartonville Volunteer Fire Department was organized by Henry R. Gerdes some time after the incorporation reference. The department was divided into two companies:

### **Number One Company**

*Henry R. Gerdes, Chief*

*Joe Arrenholz*

*John Lane*

*William Barton*

*Sam Pye*

*William Lane*

*Bert Higgins*

*Phil Schindler*

*George Sanderson*

*Louis Weiman*

The first fire apparatus used were hand-pulled carts containing hose. When a fire was reported, the bell in the belfry on top of the old village hall was rung and the firemen pulled the hose carts to the fire or they were pulled by a car, if one was available.

In 1926, the department obtained its first fire truck. That year, both fire companies were organized into one company with Sam Ball being elected chief, a position he held until January, 1962. He was succeeded by Wilbur Lauterbach.

In 1957, the village built a new village hall and garage for the fire trucks; and, in 1974, built a new three-stall firehouse on Garfield Avenue. Today, Bartonville has two modern fire houses and a modern fleet of firetrucks and a rescue vehicle.

### **Number Two Company**

*Nick Arrenholz, Chief*

*Sam Ball*

*George Racine*

*Wes Ball*

*Henry Lauterbach*

*John Tester*

*Chris Tester*

*Frank Collier*

*Al Randall*

*George Ewing*



*John Roelfs Home*



*Dr. H. L. Williams and Al Randall Homes  
Randall home now Stone Mortuary*



*Barton & Gerdes Homes decorated for fourth of July*



*H. E. Lauterbach Lumber Co.*



*Threshing wheat on site of Oak Grove West School*



*First beer arriving at the Airport when prohibition ended  
Mr. K. C. Jones third from left*

# CHAPTER III

## *Bartonville Today*

Bartonville of the 1970s is a far cry from the little village of 1903. With a population of 7,216, according to the 1970 federal census, one-half of Bartonville's working force is engaged in manufacturing, with an average income of \$10,408.00 and a median educational level of 10.4 years of formal schooling.

Bartonville is typical of many suburban communities located on the edge of a much larger city; its old "downtown" is at a standstill with very little new business activity. However, West Garfield Avenue is expanding, and the new Bartonville Square Shopping Center, containing a Kroger Store and a Super X Drug Store, is the newest addition to the businesses locating there.

With the completion of Interstate 474, Bartonville will have easy access to the vast interstate highway system. Construction of this highway has a second benefit. For years, the grade

between Bartonville and Peoria has been an eyesore of junkyards and dumps. With the highway occupying this space, it should provide the town with a much more pleasant appearance, particularly to travelers and newcomers to the community.

Living in Bartonville offers many advantages to its residents. Being a part of the Central Illinois metropolitan area, Bartonville enjoys a good business climate and steady employment, as compared to many parts of the country. The community has good schools and streets and an administration that is responsive to the needs of the people and is ably led by Mayor Gerald Stuaan. The fire department is considered one of the best volunteer fire departments in the state and is led by Chief Donald J. Stewart.

The police force is on duty twenty-four hours a day, with nine full-time and one part-time officers, and four

full-time dispatchers, commanded by Chief Gene Skotnicki.

Some important anniversaries are approaching. 1978 will mark the 100th anniversary of the opening of the first post office in Bartonville and will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the village's incorporation. In recognizing these important occasions in village history, one can appreciate what past generations have enjoyed, that Bartonville is a great place to live.



*New Fire Station*



*Village Hall*



*Limestone Township Hall*



*Bartonville Village Board in session*



*Bartonville Police Chief Gene Skotnicki*



*Henry R. Gerdes*  
1903 - 1904



*W. W. Barton*  
1904 - 1922



*William R. Guppy*  
1922 - 1929



*Wm. J. Stoker Jr.  
1929 - 1941*



*William Guppy Jr.*  
1941 - 1945



*Wilbur H. Lauterbach  
1945 - 1961*



*Chester A. Polson*  
1961 - 1969



*Gerald A. Stuaan  
1969 - present*

## *Village Officers*

1903

Mayor	Henry R. Gerdes
Clerk	J. A. Logan
Treasurer	J. T. McGurchen
Marshall	Michael Corey

### **Trustees**

William Amsler	William Crots
Tobias Gerdes	Beecher Ricketts
Seibold Schick	Thomas Huxtable, Sr.
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	Joseph Tester, Sr.
Police Magistrate	Unknown

1904

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Elmore Morse
Treasurer	John Hill, Sr.
Marshall	Michael Corey

### **Trustees**

John Powell	Frank Moffatt
Joseph B. Barton	Frank Collier
Henry R. Gerdes	Lott Hurst
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	John Hiltrop, Sr.
Board Health	J. A. Logan
Police Magistrate	William Myers

## **1905**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	J. A. Logan
Treasurer	John Hill, Sr.
Marshall	Michael Corey

### **Trustees**

J. B. Barton	Henry R. Gerdes
Frank Collier	John Powell
Lot Hurst	Frank Moffatt
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	John Hiltrop, Sr.
Police Magistrate	P. M. Koener

## **1906**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Chris Leston
Treasurer	John Hill, Sr.
Marshall	Michael Corey

### **Trustees**

Frank Collier	Oscar Morse
Martin Thome	Lot Hurst
Frank Moffatt	J. B. Barton
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	John Hiltrop, Sr.
Police Magistrate	Frank Adkins

## **1907**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Chris Tester
Treasurer	John Hill, Sr.
Marshall	Michael Corey

### **Trustees**

Frank Collier	Oscar Morse
Martin Thome	Lot Hurst
Frank Moffatt	J. B. Barton
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	John Hiltrop, Sr.
Police Magistrate	Frank Adkins

## **1908**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Chris Tester
Treasurer	John Hill, Sr.
Marshall	Michael Corey

### **Trustees**

Frank Collier	Martin Thome
J. B. Barton	Karl Franks
Lot Hurst	Frank Moffatt
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	William Smith, Sr.
Police Magistrate	G. J. Blandin

## **1909**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Chris Tester
Treasurer	John Hill, Sr.
Marshall	William Smith, Sr.

### **Trustees**

Frank Moffatt	Lot Hurst
Karl Franks	Martin Thome
Frank Collier	J. B. Barton
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	William Smith, Sr.
Police Magistrate	George J. Blandin

## **1910**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Otto Hiltrop
Treasurer	John Hill, Sr.
Marshall	John Powell

### **Trustees**

Frank Collier	Cole Herman
James Dawson	Karl Frank
Frank Moffatt	Lot Hurst
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	John Powell
Police Magistrate	Frank Adkins

## 1911

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Otto Hiltrop
Treasurer	John Hill, Sr.
Marshall	William Smith, Sr.

## Trustees

Martin Thome	Karl Franks
Frank Moffatt	Frank Collier
Cale Herman	James Dawson
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	William Smith, Sr.
Police Magistrate	Frank Adkins

## 1912

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Charles Hoffnagle
Treasurer	John Hill
Marshall	Richard Bowen

## Trustees

Frank Moffatt	Karl Franks
Martin Thome	Frank Collier
Cale Herman	James Dawson
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	William Smith, Sr.
Police Magistrate	Albert Troth

### **1913**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Charles Hoffnagle
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	W. B. Ricketts

### **Trustees**

James Bridgeman, Jr.	Louis Weiman
Nick Backes	Frank Collier
James Dawson	Cale Herman
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	William Smith, Sr.
Police Magistrate	

### **1914**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Charles Hoffnagle
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	W. B. Ricketts

### **Trustees**

Martin Thome	Frank Collier
Cale Herman	James Bridgeman, Jr.
Louis Weiman	Nick Backes
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	William Smith, Sr.
Police Magistrate	Albert Troth

## **1915**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Charles Hoffnagle
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	William Smith, Sr.

### **Trustees**

Frank Collier	Cale Herman
Martin Thome	Karl Franks
George W. Racine	Otto Hiltrop
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	William Smith, Sr.
Police Magistrate	S. L. Winslow

## **1917**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Charles Hoffnagle
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	James Sparks

### **Trustees**

George Racine	Otto Hiltrop
Karl Franks	Frank Collier
Cale Herman	Martin Thome
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	James Sparks
Police Magistrate	S. F. Winslow
Health Officer	Dr. H. L. Williams

## 1918

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Charles Hofnagle
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	James Sparks

## Trustees

Martin Thome	Frank Collier
Cale Herman	George Racine
Otto Hiltrop	Karl Franks
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	William Smith, Sr.
Police Magistrate	S. L. Winslow

## 1919

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Charles Hoffnagle
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	James Sparks
Police Magistrate	S. L. Winslow
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	James Sparks

## Trustees

George Racine	Karl Franks
Martin Thome	Frank Collier
Cale Herman	Otto Hiltrop

## **1920**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Chris Tester
Police Magistrate	S. L. Winslow
Marshall	Charles Hoffnagle
Attorney	E. J. Galbraith
Street Commissioner	Charles Hoffnagle

### **Trustees**

Frank Collier	Louis Weiman
Robert Guppy	Martin Thome
Frank Schindler	Cale Herman

## **1921**

Mayor	W. W. Barton
Clerk	Chris Tester
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	Harry Bornhold
Police Magistrate	S. L. Winslow
Attorney	E. J. Galbraith
Street Commissioner	Harry Bornhold

### **Trustees**

William Polson	C. E. Ward
Frank Schindler	Frank Collier
Louis Weiman	Robert Guppy

## **1922**

Mayor	Robert Guppy
Clerk	George Racine
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	Edward Honold
Police Magistrate	S. L. Winslow
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	Edward Honold

### **Trustees**

H. E. Lauterbach	Herman Keopple
John Parr	William Polson
C. E. Ward	Frank Schindler

## **1923**

Mayor	Robert Guppy
Clerk	George W. Racine
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	James Sparks
Police Magistrate	S. L. Winslow
Attorney	Robert Scholes
Street Commissioner	Herman Rosenbohm

### **Trustees**

C. E. Ward	William Polson
William Stoker	H. E. Lauterbach
Herman Keopple	John Parr

## **1924**

Mayor	Robert Guppy
Clerk	John Parr
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	James Sparks
Police Magistrate	S. L. Winslow
Attorney	Joseph L. Johnson
Street Commissioner	Jess Higgins

## **Trustees**

Warner Pye	Louis Weiman
H. E. Lauterbach	George Sanderson
C. E. Ward	William Stoker

## **1925**

Mayor	Robert Guppy
Clerk	John Parr
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	James Sparks
Police Magistrate	John Sanderson
Attorney	Joseph L. Johnson
Street Commissioner	Jess Higgins

## **Trustees**

George Sanderson	William Smith
William Stoker	Warner Pye
H. E. Lauterbach	Louis Weiman

## **1926**

Mayor	Robert Guppy
Clerk	John Parr
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	James Sparks
Police Magistrate	John Sanderson
Attorney	Joseph L. Johnson
Street Commissioner	James Sparks

### **Trustees**

H. E. Lauterbach	Warner Pye
Louis Weiman	George Sanderson
William Smith, Jr.	William Stoker

## **1927 & 1928**

Mayor	Robert Guppy
Clerk	John Parr
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Marshall	James Sparks
Police Magistrate	John Sanderson
Attorney	Joseph L. Johnson
Street Commissioner	James Sparks

### **Trustees**

H. E. Lauterbach	William Stoker
Warner Pye	William H. Smith
George Sanderson	Louis Weiman

## **1929 & 1930**

Mayor	William R. Guppy
Clerk	Louis Weiman
Treasurer	George W. Herman
Attorney	Joseph L. Johnson

### **Trustees**

H. E. Lauterbach	Warner Pye
George Sanderson	William Stoker
William H. Smith	John Parr

## **1931**

Mayor	William Stoker
Clerk	Louis Weiman

### **Trustees**

John Parr	Albert Monroe
Elmer Thompson	William Polson
George Sanderson	William Smith

## **1931-32**

Mayor	William Stoker
Clerk	Louis Weiman

### **Trustees**

William Guppy	William Polson
George Sanderson	John Parr
Albert Monroe	Elmer Thompson

### **1932-33**

Mayor  
Clerk

William Stoker  
Homer Rhoads

#### **Trustees**

John Parr  
William Harris, Jr.  
George Sanderson

William R. Conn  
William Guppy  
William Polson

### **1933-34**

Mayor  
Clerk  
Treasurer

William Stoker  
Homer Rhoads  
W. W. Barton

#### **Trustees**

William Guppy  
William Polson  
William R. Conn

George Sanderson  
John Parr  
William Harris, Jr.

### **1934-35**

Mayor  
Clerk

William Stoker  
L. G. Fishel

#### **Trustees**

William Guppy  
William Polson  
William R. Conn

George Sanderson  
John Parr  
William Harris, Jr.

**1935-36**

Mayor  
Clerk

William Stoker  
L. G. Fishel

**Trustees**

William Conn  
William Polson  
George Sanderson

John Parr  
William Harris  
Henry W. Mohn

**1936-37**

Mayor  
Clerk

William Stoker  
L. G. Fishel

**Trustees**

William Conn  
William Polson  
George Sanderson

John Parr  
William Harris  
Henry W. Mohn

**1937-38**

Mayor  
Clerk

William Stoker  
L. G. Fishel

**Trustees**

William Polson  
George Sanderson  
Henry Mohn

Otto Hiltrop  
William Conn  
Burgess S. Hayes

**1938-39**

Mayor  
Clerk

William Stoker  
L. G. Fishel

**Trustees**

William Polson  
George Sanderson  
Henry Mohn

Otto Hiltrop  
William Conn  
Burgess S. Hayes

**1939-41**

Mayor  
Clerk

William Stoker  
L. G. Fishel

**Trustees**

William Polson  
George Sanderson  
Henry Mohn

Otto Hiltrop  
William Conn  
Leslie A. Taylor

**1941-43**

Mayor  
Clerk  
Attorney

William R. Guppy, Jr.  
Homer Rhoads  
Jessie Weast

**Trustees**

William Polson  
William Conn  
William Claudin  
(resigned in April of 1942)

Otto Hiltrop  
Leslie Taylor  
Walter Swardenski  
(resigned in September  
of 1942)

## **1943-45**

Mayor	William R. Guppy, Jr.
Clerk	Homer Rhoads

### **Trustees**

Wilbur Lauterbach	Otto Hiltrop
William Conn	L. G. Fishel
Clyde Higgins	Benjamin Taylor

## **1945-47**

Mayor	W. H. Lauterbach
Clerk	Homer Rhoads
Attorney	Charles Ullrich

### **Trustees**

Gordon Swardenski	A. R. Siddle
William R. Conn	Wilbur Schuller
Fred Ewers	Lawrence Fishel
Ralph Stewart (Appointed May, 1946)	(Resigned January, 1946)

## **1947-49**

Mayor	W. H. Lauterbach
Clerk	Homer Rhoads
Attorney	Charles Ullrich
Treasurer	(Resigned June, 1948) Theodore B. Durfee (Appointed July, 1948) W. W. Barton

### **Trustees**

Gordon Swardenski	James Mahannah, Sr.
Fred Ewers	Joe Cose
A. R. Siddle, Sr.	William R. Conn

## **1949-51**

Mayor	Wilbur Lauterbach
Clerk	Homer Rhoads
Treasurer	Ralph Stewart
Attorney	Theodore B. Durfee

### **Trustees**

Gordon Swardenski	James Mahannah, Sr.
Donald E. McCowan	William R. Conn
Joe Cose	Hugo Hoepfner
(Resigned June, 1949)	(Appointed July, 1949)
Fred Ewers	Elmer Heitzman
(Resigned May, 1951)	(Appointed to replace Fred Ewers, May, 1951)

## **1951-53**

Mayor	Wilbur H. Lauterbach
Clerk*	Homer Rhoads
Treasurer**	Ralph Stewart
Attorney	Theodore B. Durfee

### **Trustees**

Rex Price, Sr.	Leonard Morse
Hugo W. Hoepfner	Donald McCowan
Gordon Swardenski	Ted Allgaier
(Resigned May, 1951)	(Appointed May, 1951)

*\*James Cornwell was appointed Acting Clerk on March 5, 1952, due to the death of Homer Rhoads.*

*\*\*Donald Stewart was appointed Treasurer on November 23, 1951, due to the death of Ralph Stewart.*

**1953-55**

Mayor	Wilbur H. Lauterbach
Clerk	James Cornwell
Treasurer	J. Richard Lambie
Attorney	Theodore B. Durfee

**Trustees**

Ted Allgaier	James Pike
Emil Manz	Rex Price
Leonard Morse	Hugo Hoepfner

**1955-57**

Mayor	W. H. Lauterbach
Clerk	James Cornwell
Treasurer	J. Richard Lambie
Attorney	Theodore B. Durfee

**Trustees**

Rex Price	Ben Taylor
Fred Fletcher	Ted Allgaier
James Pike	Emil Manz

**1957-59**

Mayor	W. H. Lauterbach
Clerk	Glenn H. Jones
Treasurer	J. Richard Lambie
Attorney	Theodore B. Durfee

### **Trustees**

Ted Allgaier  
Jay Schindler  
Ben Taylor

James Pike  
Rex Price  
Fred Fletcher

### **1959-61**

Mayor  
Clerk  
Treasurer  
Attorney

W. H. Lauterbach  
Glenn H. Jones  
J. Richard Lambie  
Theodore B. Durfee

### **Trustees**

Ted Allgaier  
Jay Schindler  
Ben Taylor

James Pike  
Rex Price  
Fred Fletcher

### **1961-63**

Mayor  
Clerk  
Treasurer  
Attorney  
Engineer

Chester Polson  
Glenn H. Jones  
J. Richard Lambie  
Theodore B. Durfee  
Roy Kastner

### **Trustees**

Robert Lawless  
Fred Fletcher  
Ben Taylor

Rex Price  
John Vegich  
Edward C. Feldman

### **1963-65**

Mayor	Chester Polson
Clerk	Glenn H. Jones
Treasurer	Merlin Lambie
Attorney	Rudolph Westphal
Engineer	Roy Kastner

### **Trustees**

Robert Lawless	Rex Price
Fred Fletcher	John Vegich
Fred Fairhurst	Edward C. Feldman

### **1965-67**

Mayor	Chester Polson
Clerk	Glenn H. Jones
Treasurer	Merlin Lambie
Attorney	Rudolph Westphal
Engineer	Roy Kastner

### **Trustees**

Edward C. Feldman	Rex Price
Fred Fletcher	John Vegich
Robert Lawless	Fred Fairhurst
Wilbur Reader	(Resigned December, 1965)
(Appointed December, 1965)	

### **1967-69**

Mayor	Chester Polson
Clerk	Glenn H. Jones
Treasurer	Merlin Lambie
Attorney	Rudolph Westphal
Engineer	Roy Kastner

### **Trustees**

Robert Lawless	Edward C. Feldman
Rex Price	Gerald A. Stuaan
John Vegich	Ben Taylor

## **1969-71**

Mayor	Gerald A. Stuaan
Clerk	Kenneth W. Lane
Treasurer	Merlin Lambie
Attorney	John C. Parkhurst
Engineer	Roy Kastner

### **Trustees**

Ben Taylor	Norman Ball
Rex Price	Donald Berrier
Robert Lawless	Jay Swardenski
Earl Chitwood	(Resigned September, 1969)
(Appointed September, 1969)	

## **1971-73**

Mayor	Gerald A. Stuaan
Clerk	Kenneth W. Lane
Treasurer	Merlin Lambie
Attorney	John C. Parkhurst
Engineer	Roy Kastner

### **Trustees**

Robert Lawless	Donald Berrier
Donald Thornton	Donald Gondek
Normal Ball	William Pirtle
(Resigned November, 1972)	Ben Taylor

(Appointed January, 1973)

## **1973-75**

Mayor	Gerald A. Stuaan
Clerk	Kenneth W. Lane
Treasurer	Merlin Lambie
Attorney	John C. Parkhurst
Engineer	Roy Kastner

### **Trustees**

William Pirtle	Fred Fletcher
Nancy Chamberlain	William Krus
Donald Gondek	Donald Thornton

## **1975-77**

Mayor	Gerald A. Stuaan
Clerk	Kenneth W. Lane
Treasurer	Merlin Lambie
Attorney	John C. Parkhurst &
Engineer	Thomas E. Leiter
	Jack Quinn

### **Trustees**

William Pirtle	Fred Fletcher
William Krus	Donald Thornton
Nancy Chamberlain	Donald Gondek
LeRoy Peters	(Resigned December, 1975)
(Appointed December, 1975)	

# CHAPTER 4

## *Industry*

### *Johnson Hydraulic Manufacturing Company*

Johnson Hydraulic Mfg. Co. was born in 1934 out of a need to keep up with the changing times. The need was that of the paper mills which used straw in the manufacture of paper for cardboard containers. Straw had formerly been obtained from stacks which had been hauled to threshers and baled by stationary balers prior to being shipped to the mills. The advent of the grain combine, which cut and threshed the grain and left the straw in the field, created a need for a pickup baler.

At the time, William A. Johnson operated a machine shop and Allis Chalmers dealership in Elkhart, Ill., a small town twenty miles from Springfield. A straw buyer for the mills who was a good friend of Mr.

Johnson discussed with him the concern of the mills, and it was believed that a baler could be designed to meet these needs. After a series of discussions with the mills, it was decided that W. A. Johnson would proceed with the development and building of pilot machines for field testing, with the paper mills underwriting the project. An Indiana corporation was set up as Steel Products, Inc., and located at Vincennes, Ind.

The testing results of these pilot machines exceeded expectations. The new machine was a "first", also, in its side feed feature, which made a continuous operation possible without a loss of feed for separation of bales. "Bill" Johnson became con-

cerned, however, about being away too much from his business at Elkhart; and the baler shop was moved to Springfield, Ill. Adaptations for manufacture were made and the balers were subjected to a full season of rigid field testing. The mills were satisfied. Their agreement for financing fulfilled, they agreed to purchase the balers as fast as they could be built until their demands were met.

In November, 1939, the shop was moved to Bartonville into space available at Laidlaw Wire Co., manufacturers of bale ties such as those used on the baler. Ten machines were built in 1940 with such satisfactory results that there developed a great deal of pressure for increased production, requiring more space and shop facilities. An arrangement was made with Sommer Products Co. to handle office requirements and to provide shop facilities. The new Illinois corporation was set up as Johnson Implement Co. Operations were carried on in Sommer's building until a building became available that had been vacated by Broderick & Bascom Rope Co.

It might be noted that during World War II Johnson's was one of only two manufacturers of field balers receiving priority allotments from the U. S. government. During the war, also, one of the paper mills recycling scrap paper collected to aid the war effort consulted Mr. Johnson to see if he could build a machine to

bale this scrap paper, facilitating its shipment to the mills for reprocessing. A portable machine was developed, and five were built to go from scrap "pen" to "pen" to bale the paper.

The straw baler production continued until 1948, at which time the mills were switching from straw to wood pulp for paper making. Since the Johnson baler was not competitive with the smaller farm type balers that came back onto the market after the war, the baler production was discontinued. It was replaced by other products such as concrete block making machines, windrow attachments for power mowers, farm wagons, fabricated corn cribs, hydraulic cylinders, and complete truck hoists. The demand for truck hoists, which had been added in 1949, became so great within a few years that other products were discontinued and full time was devoted to hydraulics. At that time the company's name was changed to Johnson Hydraulic Mfg. Co. Johnson's pioneered the development of telescopic hoists for all sizes of trucks, including semi trailers of all sizes and body lengths, as well as custom built cylinders for mining machinery, large platform dumpers, etc.

On the night of March 16, 1955, the plant was destroyed by a fire which started in an adjoining building occupied by the Illini Foundry. This caused a few months' setback in production. With salvaged, rebuilt

equipment as well as some borrowed from good friends, the Illinois Machinery Co., Johnson Hydraulic resumed production using space in Sommer Products' plant and some older buildings nearby. Meanwhile, a new building was built on space obtained from Keystone Steel & Wire Co. with a twenty-year lease.

In 1957 an addition was built for a hydraulic pump and valve department and machine shop. A second addition was built in 1960 to make room for raw materials and added storage space. A few years later it became apparent that plans must be made for future growth.

In 1967 ninety-six acres of land were acquired north of the airport on Maxwell Road, where a new plant would be located, with the remaining acreage to be developed for industry. The area was named Liberty Industrial Park. A warehouse to take care of storage needs was erected on this land in 1969.

In 1971 a second building was erected to house the manufacture of a new product—Johnson's had added dump bodies to their line, enabling them to sell body and hoist as a complete unit.

In this Bicentennial year of 1976 a sizeable third building is nearing completion to house the hoist plant and the offices.

From an idea in 1934, Johnson Hydraulic Mfg. Co. has grown to a facility of 75,000 square feet, employing 125 people—and William A.

"Pop" Johnson, at eighty-two years, is on the job every day.

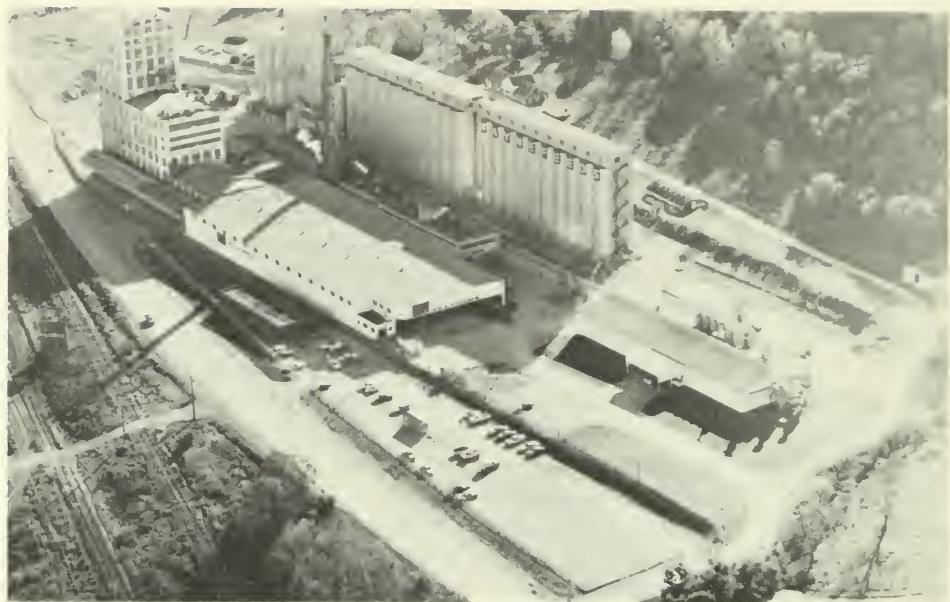
Mr. Johnson is chairman of the board and Raymond L. Fauber is president of the company.

In honor of the Bicentennial, Johnson Hydraulic will soon erect a seventy foot flag pole at Liberty Industrial Park to fly a lighted "Old Glory" measuring fifteen feet by twenty-five feet. It is the company's wish to bring this landmark to the area as a source of beauty and pride to its citizens.

### **Allied Mills**

The history of Allied Mills and Wayne Feeds virtually parallels the history of the commercial feed industry. The firm got its start in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1897, under the name of the Marsden Company, formed to utilize corn by-products. This was mixed with molasses, oil cakes, gluten meal and corn meals to make a balanced ration for cattle, horses, and mules, and was largely exported to Europe.

Another firm, the American Milling Company, also of Philadelphia, held important patents for processing molasses cattle feeds. This firm was acquired in 1906. Two brands of molasses feeds were manufactured, Sucrene and Sugarine, which are still maintained by Allied Mills. Marsden and American Milling consolidated in the American Milling Company in 1907, and, in 1909, their headquarters was transferred from Phila-



*Allied Mills*

delphia to Chicago, and, in 1913, to Peoria.

A new eleven-story plant was built at Bartonville in 1920, and it was said to be the largest feed mill in the world at the time, a distinction it held for many years.

On September 1, 1929, American Milling and Fort Wayne Milling merged and became Allied Mills, Inc., manufacturing under the brand name "Wayne Feeds".

Since scientific feeding of livestock and poultry began to develop rapidly, the demand for mixed feeds was greatly increased. In 1937, a research division was established at Bartonville, consisting of biological labs and a research farm to supplement ana-

lytical labs and quality control programs. These facilities were moved in 1947 to Libertyville, Illinois, where they still exist.

It is interesting to note that it was a Bartonville lab where scientists determined the Vitamin D and manganese requirements of chickens. In the early years, some of the most popular and thriving products included feeds for commercially-raised foxes and minks.

In 1973, the Bartonville facility was converted to the production of Wayne Pet Foods and specialty diets for laboratory animals. This facility has the distinction of being one of the oldest operating plants in the company's history.

## *Keystone Steel and Wire Company*

In 1889, Peter Sommer, a Tazewell County, Illinois, farmer renting a farm near Dillon, got an idea for wire fence. He stretched some pieces of smooth wire lengthwise about six rods, crossed them with vertical wires, then fastened them at intersections with washers to form a portable wire fence. Unfortunately, it did not work because the wire could not withstand the sharp crimping in the washer.

Soon thereafter, Peter Sommer had an idea for a wire fence that would work. The fence consisted of twisting the horizontal and stay wires together while keeping the stay upright. The start of each succeeding twist was then moved back the length of the twist. These wires were then twisted with the selvage wire a sufficient distance to make the proper lineal spacing, then shifted back the distance of the twist on each succeeding line wire, and so on.

Working with his older sons, P.W. and John, Peter Sommer made a sample of twisted wire fence by hand. The Sommers tried it out and found that it worked very well.

To manufacture enough fencing of this type for their needs, Peter Sommer and his sons decided to build a loom. First they made a small model, one-eighth the size of the anticipated machine, using a method they referred to as the "half journal",

the bottom half of the journal carrying the strand wire and the upper half of the journal carrying the stay wire. Using light copper wire, they produced a small sample of the completed fence.

A hand-operated machine for making this fence was started in March, 1889. A power machine with hand controls was then built, being completed in November of that year. This machine had a capacity of twenty rods per day.

In the fall of 1890, a factory was built in Tremont, Illinois. At this time, Peter Sommer had approximately \$3,000.00 invested in the business and had formed a three-way partnership with his sons, John and P.W.

The business was incorporated by the three partners in 1892, having an authorized capitalization of \$30,000.00, under the name of Keystone Woven Wire Fence Company, the name derived from the shape of the mesh. Later, in 1907, the company was incorporated as Keystone Steel and Wire Company in Illinois, and, on June 30, 1955, was incorporated in Delaware.

From time to time, as the younger brothers, J.W., B.L., and W.H., became old enough, they too began to work and, when they reached their maturity, acquired an interest in the business.



*Keystone's Steel Mill under construction in 1917*



*Keystone Steel & Wire Co. Wire Mill 1910*



*Steamboat delivering pig iron to Keystone*



*View from Adams St. before McKinley St. was built*



*Keystone Steel & Wire  
aerial view*

An addition was built to the factory in 1892, and, in 1895, when the shipping facilities and accommodations in Tremont became inadequate, the company moved its factory to the village of South Peoria.

The business continued to prosper. The South Peoria site was condemned for use in the expansion of the North Western Railroad switching yards, and, in 1901, the company was forced to move its factory facilities. The new site was Keystone's present location in South Bartonville, where three acres of land were acquired.

In 1905, Keystone built its wire mill. There, steel rods were cleaned, drawn to desired finished size, galvanized, and fabricated into fencing.

The addition of these facilities greatly increased the operations of the plant, the number of employees, and the net profit. With these facilities, Keystone expanded its line, adding nails and barbed wire.

The next big step in the company's development came during World War I, when the supply of steel was inadequate to meet the demands of a wartime economy. In 1916, the steel mill at Keystone was built. Steel was made in open-hearth furnaces until the 1960's, when it was converted to electric furnaces.

Keystone's steel mills grew to include equipment for processing raw materials into steel, then rolling the steel ingots into blooms, billets, and finally into rods.

In 1922, Keystone's business was tremendously stimulated by the development of an improved method of zinc coating wire. This process, developed by Keystone men and patented by the company under the name, "Galvannealing", heat-treated the galvanized wire and added greatly to its life. Merchandizing of this improved product under the name "Red Brand" fencing increased Keystone's business in the agricultural line and made it the foremost independent supplier of farm fencing in the world.

The depression years showed Keystone management its dependence upon the agricultural market. Throughout the 1930s, Keystone improved its facilities for making finer types of wire, designing its equipment to produce wire to close tolerances for industry. One of these items is wire for steel cable. Keystone engineers produced superior methods for drawing wire continuously. Speedy wire drawing through multiple passes is practiced in the plant without sufficient heat being generated to harm the wire.

Considerable progress was made in producing wire for the cold heading industry, which manufactures such items as bolts, screws, and rivets. Hundreds of factories throughout the nation are supplied their requirements of steel wire by Keystone.

Year after year, the company has turned back part of its earnings into

the modernization of the plant and its equipment. Because of this policy, the production of high quality wire and wire products is made easier, faster, and safer for Keystone employees. Since World War II, millions of dollars have been spent to provide better equipment.

Plant additions have made Keystone an even better place to work. The company's continued progress is well illustrated by its growth in employment. Since 1945, employment has increased from 1,703 to approximately 3,200.

Keystone Steel and Wire is a division of Keystone Consolidated Industries, Inc. Other major divisions within Keystone Consolidated Industries, Inc., include: Mid-States Steel and Wire Division of Crawfordsville, Indiana; National Lock Division of Rockford, Illinois; and Broderick and Bascom Rope Company. Through these divisions, Keystone Consolidated Industries, Inc. has other interests in the United States and Mexico.

Keystone men and women have kept pace with plant expansion and progress by increasing their activity in community projects — in school board activity, municipal government, service and welfare organizations, and civic and social organizations. The management encourages such participation and has recognized that its progress depends upon that of the community.

# CHAPTER 5

## *Institutions*

### **Bartonville Methodist Church**

The first Methodist worship in the Bartonville community was conducted by the circuit riders as early as 1828. The first Methodist group was organized in 1848, and, by 1851, meetings were held in an old brick schoolhouse on Smithville Road.

North Limestone Church, which was the first Methodist church, was built on Coal Hollow Road near Smithville Road and Roosevelt Street and served until 1882. One of the oldest buildings in Bartonville, this was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Oren Davis until they moved to Madison Street in recent years.

Long before 1882, larger quarters were necessary, but it took Joseph Collier to get the project moving. He donated the land on the corner of Adams and McClure Streets, which is

just below the hill on which his former mansion (until recently, a nursing home) still stands. The first church on this site was a frame structure dedicated in September, 1882. In the years following, the congregation grew moderately.

After World War I, the church again experienced growing pains. A new concrete block structure was built on the same site in 1922. By 1944, with the depression behind, the area began to expand and the church membership grew, taxing the facilities to the fullest. Dr. H. L. Williams' property next door was purchased and became the parish hall. In 1948, the first parsonage was built just west of the church.

In December, 1956, W. W. Barton gave the church \$100,000.00 in securities. The congregation met on December 10, 1956, and decided to proceed with the complete remodel-



*Old Bartonville Methodist Church*



*Bartonville Methodist Church*



Bartonville Methodist Church



Oak Grove Baptist Church

ing and building program. Dedication was held on January 19, 1958. Shortly thereafter, work was begun on the educational wing, which was completed in 1961. The parish hall, formerly Dr. Williams' home, was sold and moved down Adams Street across from the Gup Hotel.

Today, the congregation, which has served the Bartonville community for 114 years, is led by Reverend John Curtis.

### ***Oak Grove Baptist Church***

Oak Grove Baptist Church is the oldest Baptist Church in Bartonville. Because its first service was held at Oak Grove School on February 28, 1944, the church took as its name, the

same name as that of the school. Warren Oliff, who was a student at Moody Bible Institute, was the first pastor. The congregation was officially organized in September of 1944.

The first building was erected at the corner of Chalmers and Salisbury in 1948 and was of frame construction. A basement was excavated under this building in 1956. The church bought its first parsonage in 1950.

During these early years, a number of pastors served Oak Grove Baptist. When Reverend Zaspel arrived as the sixth pastor in 1960, a period of growth was experienced. Soon the existing facilities became inadequate and, in 1962, the church voted to

completely remodel and enlarge the old building and add a large wing to provide much-needed Sunday School classes, a pastor's study, church office, fellowship hall, and kitchen. A successful building fund drive was held and ground was broken for the present building on May 29, 1963.

During the years following this building program, the church prospered. It now has a fine brick edifice at Chalmers and Salisbury and a brick parsonage at LaFayette and Salisbury Avenues.

### *St. Anthony's Liturgical Center*

It had been the dream of the Roman Catholic people in the Bartonville area to have a church. Little had been done toward that goal until the spring of 1968, when a group of people petitioned Bishop John Franz of the Peoria Diocese to allow a mission to be started in Bartonville.

As a result of this petition, the Bishop directed that religious classes for Catholic children of the area be established. In the fall, classes were begun on Monday evenings at Oak Grove West School. Father Leon Sullivan, the Chaplain at Peoria State Hospital, invited local Catholics to attend his Sunday services in the new auditorium at the State Hospital.

In April, 1969, another meeting was held with Bishop Franz. The



*St. Anthony's Liturgical Center*

group requested the continuation of classes and a regularly-designated place of worship. As a result of this meeting, St. Anthony's Mission was created and the first Mass was held at the Auditorium with Father Dale Wellman as celebrant.

Land for a permanent structure was secured at 2525 Skyway in High Meadows Subdivision. On June 27, 1971, ground was dedicated for St. Anthony's Liturgical Center. Construction was begun in May of 1972, and the first Mass was celebrated in the new center on Sunday, December 10, 1972. It was formally dedicated on Sunday, June 10, 1973, by Bishop Edward O'Rourke.



*Bartonville Christian Church*

### ***Bartonville Christian Church***

In April, 1959, Bartonville Christian Church was organized by a group of interested families who gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Fulk. The church began with the people meeting in various homes until a suitable meeting place, the "old store building" across the street from the present Bartonville Bank on Adams Street, was secured. Realizing a continuing growth, ground-breaking for the present church building at 4900 Pfeiffer Road was held on November 21, 1965, and it was dedicated on October 16, 1966.

Loren Deckard was the first to minister the congregation, beginning only six weeks after the group's first meeting. Mr. Deckard served the congregation until August, 1967. In December, 1967, Don Nickerson became the second minister, serving until July, 1975. Leroy Thompson began ministry to the Bartonville Christian Church in September, 1975.

The Bartonville Christian Church building has an office, study, fourteen classrooms, kitchen, nursery, and a fellowship hall. The congregation wishes to be better known for its spiritual vitality and sincere Christian dedication than for the building in which they meet.



*Old St. John's Lutheran Church*

### ***St. John's Lutheran Church***

During the middle of the nineteenth century, Evangelical Lutheran immigrants, mostly from East Friesia, Germany, settled in Limestone Township, Peoria County, Illinois. These early settlers had come by way of New Orleans, then up the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers to Peoria, at that time a small village.

These Lutherans longed for their own familiar liturgy and the Holy Sacraments. The first Lutheran service held by this group was conducted by Pastor H. Kopmann in the fall of 1851, at the log home of Gerd Ojemann on a farm four miles west

of Peoria. Pastor Kopmann conducted services regularly for about two years and taught parochial school four days a week. Two years later, in 1853, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church congregation was organized.

In the fall of 1855, the first church building was erected; its dimensions were 16' x 16' and it was built of rough lumber, the pews being of the same material. As the congregation grew, it became necessary to build another building, 18' x 36', with a smaller addition used as a parsonage.

St. John's called its first full-time pastor in 1855. Pastor J. T. Warnke was installed and began his pastorate. The young congregation dedicated a cemetery on February 4, 1857.



*St. John Lutheran Church*

The church experienced slow growth for the next several years. These years were a time of hardship and strife. Each family was expected to donate coal to heat the church and parsonage. Members donated their time cleaning the building. Several pastors served during these years, some staying only a couple of years.

Pastor E. Bangerter was called to St. John's in the spring of 1874. He served for fifteen years, during a period of peace and growth. A meeting on May 17, 1875 resulted in the decision to build a new church. This building was dedicated in August, 1876, and cost \$4,000.00, including the bell. Over the years, a number of improvements were added. The parsonage received central heat in 1920,

and the church and parsonage were served by a Delco plant, making electricity possible.

All during this time, services were held in German. Beginning in 1925, English was substituted part of the time. Gradually, German was phased out altogether, as the younger people learned only English.

The years following World War II saw tremendous growth in the church. It was again apparent that a new building would have to be built. Land was purchased across Smithville Road and a building committee and fund drive was organized.

Ground was broken on May 7, 1950. The cornerstone was laid on September 2, 1951, and the new stone building of Gothic style was

dedicated on October 26, 1952. The plans originally included a parish hall; however, finances did not permit both to be built at the same time. Ten years lapsed before the parish hall was built, but, finally, on January 22, 1967, the last unit was dedicated.

Today, St. John's Church has a handsome complex of buildings and grounds. Although it is not in Bartonville proper, it is included in this book because it is one of the truly pioneer churches and is among the oldest congregations in Limestone Township and Peoria County. The present pastor is Donald Weber.

On Easter morning, March 29, 1959, the first services of Trinity Church were held in the Oak Grove School gym with Reverend Ben Haddick as the first pastor. The congregation experienced substantial growth in the next few years.

On May 27, 1962, the congregation hired an architect to draw plans for a house of worship. These plans received approval of the building committee, Presbytery, Synod, and Farmers Savings and Loan. Ground was broken on April 7, 1963, and the building was completed. The first service was held on October 6, 1963. The congregation has continued to grow and is now served by Reverend Scott Stephen.

### *Trinity Presbyterian Church*

Trinity Presbyterian had its beginnings as Pleasant Hill Sunday School, which was organized on March 12, 1871, at a place called "Dutch Hill". In the early days, this area had great potential for growth, but, by the middle of the twentieth century, it was noted that the area was not conducive to further growth. In 1958, the Department of National Missions proposed three possible sites for relocation: Morton, Germantown, and Bartonville. Bartonville was decided upon and, after a census was taken, sufficient interest and support was indicated. A ten-acre site was purchased at the corner of Pfeiffer and Hollis Roads for \$27,500.



*Trinity Presbyterian Church*



*Old Bethel Lutheran Church Jefferson & Garfield*

### **Bethel Lutheran Church**

The earliest efforts to hold Sunday School and Lutheran services in Bartonville were made in 1894 and 1895. In 1901, a Sunday School was organized, but this was discontinued due to opposition to using a public school for religious purposes. In 1907, Sunday School was held in Huxtable Hall.

This attempt seemed to work out well and soon services were being conducted on a regular basis in both English and German by Pastor C. August Decker. On March 7, 1909, the congregation was officially organized and a constitution was adopted. Pastor Decker was asked to

solicit subscriptions for the building of a church. A successful fund drive was held with almost \$1,000.00 raised in Bartonville alone. Other contributions were received from independent and other congregations. On July 4, 1909, the little congregation voted to build its first church. The contract was awarded to Henry Lauterbach for \$2,570.00 and the church was dedicated on November 14, 1909.

By the late 1930's, it became apparent that it would be necessary to have larger facilities if growth were to continue. On January 17, 1937, the Hill property on Colona Avenue was purchased and the large house was moved. An architect was hired to draw plans for a church-parish hall

and parsonage. Pastor F. A. Park realized that the building would have to be constructed in stages. It was decided to proceed with construction of the parish hall and parsonage at once and delay building the church until later. The congregation and pastor occupied this first unit around Easter of 1941. The parish hall served the congregation for the next sixteen years for both worship and fellowship purposes.

By 1954, the time seemed right to proceed with plans for building the last unit. Under the leadership of Pastor F. M. Bunge, plans proceeded toward the goal.

Albert J. Heine and Associates of Chicago were engaged as architects. On April 25, 1954, the congregation voted to accept the architects' plans and proceed with a fund-raising campaign. The fund drive resulted in pledges totalling over \$95,000.00. The cornerstone was laid on September 9, 1956, and the new church was finished and dedicated on October 6, 1957.

During the fund drive, the church received a very generous gift. W. W. Barton presented \$100,000.00 to this church in the form of stocks. This gift made possible the purchase of a fine Casavant Pipe Organ and substantially reduced the indebtedness.

Bethel Lutheran Church today is a growing congregation led by Pastor David Lerseth. The imposing white Lannon stone structure dominates the Bartonville skyline.



*Bethel Lutheran Church*



*Bethel Baptist Church*

## *Monroe School District #70*



*Bartonville Baptist Church*

The original site of Monroe School was at the northeast corner of what is now Greater Peoria Airport. This site was originally the location of the Limestone Township Town Hall, which was built in 1881, moved in 1935, and sold in 1938.

The cornerstone from the old Town Hall was opened by the Parent-Teachers Association of the school and replaced in one corner of the new school, known as "Hedgerow School", in October 3, 1938.

Over the years, this school experienced rapid growth due to the great number of homes built to the imme-



*Hedgerow School*

diate north and east side of the airport which this school district served. Several detached wooden buildings were located on the grounds to handle the expanding population until a new brick addition was built onto the original frame building.

The school was renamed "Monroe" in honor of the Monroe family which owned part of the land now occupied by the airport.

It had been recognized for a number of years that Monroe School was located in a very dangerous place. One runway of the airport was located adjacent to the school building and was in the flight path of numerous takeoffs and landings daily. The Board of Education was able to purchase land on Cisna Road immediately east of the Air National Guard Hangar and a modern fireproof building was built. Several additions have been made since.

### ***Bartonville School District #66***

The first school in Bartonville was a log cabin near the viaduct on the Bartonville grade to Peoria. It was a private school, and only those able to pay could attend.

In 1840, a new log schoolhouse was erected near Mohn's Mine at the top of Brown's Hill. It was called "Coal Hollow School" and was frequently used as a church.

In 1864, a one-room frame building was erected at the bottom of Ball's Hill. It had wooden benches and a



*Bartonville School*

large blackboard across the front of the room. The children who attended this school were the Ball, Collier, Smith, Bishop, and Lane families. The teachers during this period were James Malone and J. D. Beal.

A two-room building was erected in 1884 at the present site on South Adams Street. It had twenty-five pupils, with Viola Eaton teaching the primary grades and Annie Snelbin, the upper grades. At that time, there was also a move to form the Oak Grove and Hedgerow Districts, and some territory from Bartonville District 66 was added to these new districts.

In 1897, the two-room building was remodelled and two more rooms were added. Miss Taylor, Miss Ball

(Mrs. Beecher Ricketts) and Mrs. Dawson were the teachers.

In 1906, this building was moved away and a new eight-room brick building was erected. Some of the board members during this period were Spencer and William Barton, Henry Gerdes, and Frank Collier.

A few years later, another division of the district was made, resulting in sending a number of former Oak Grove students to Bartonville.

In 1926, a new addition was made adding eight more rooms and a large modern gymnasium; to serve the 420 students and thirteen teachers. Eight more rooms, a cafeteria, a sack-lunch room, and rest rooms were added in 1948.

In 1960, Bartonville Grade School added a new auditorium, with four classrooms being converted from the old auditorium. Because the new auditorium was two stories high, the balcony was used for new offices, a faculty lunch room, a music room, and storage space.

## **Oak Grove School District #68**

The first family living in the area now served by Oak Grove School was the Scholl family, who settled on 160 acres of land in 1835. Soon after their coming, three other families arrived; the Roelfs, the Hermans, and the Petersons. The Roelfs came up the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers in 1845. Their son, John, lived in the community until his death a few years ago.

In 1860, a gentleman named Thome deeded one-half acre of land to the community for a public school and Mr. Trial, another resident, deeded one-half acre for a playground. The people called the first school "The Trial School", but a dispute arose between the donors of the land concerning the name, so, soon afterward, the name was changed to "Oak Grove" to settle the argument. Oak Grove School, which was known as District 8, was a frame building surrounded by a grove of oak trees.



*Oak Grove School built 1921*



*Oak Grove School burned 1922*



*Oak Grove West School*



*Oak Grove East School*

With the opening of the Peoria State Hospital in 1900, the Oak Grove School District grew, as the result of the small building boom created when Mr. Scholl and Mr. Herman sold lots to State Hospital employees. Soon a semi-organized town known as "Light City" was established.

In 1922, the old frame schoolhouse burned to the ground and the students attended classes in a building at Peoria State Hospital until another building could be built. The new two-room concrete block building was later doubled with the addition of two more rooms, and again was doubled in the early 1940's when four more rooms were added, making this a two-story building. Subsequently, other ground level additions were added in 1954 and 1958. The old two-story, eight-room building was demolished in 1970.

The district had grown so fast that, by the late 1950s, it was apparent that more space would be required. Land was purchased on West Garfield Avenue and Oak Grove West was built. This modern building houses the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, with the lower grades housed at Oak Grove East.

### ***Limestone Community High School District #310***

Before the 1950s, high school students from Bartonville and surrounding areas had to go either to



*Limestone Community High School*

Peoria or Pekin schools. Their tuition was paid with taxes levied by a non-high school district. By the late 1940's, it was recognized that a different arrangement would have to be made, since voters consistently refused to raise taxes for a school system over which they had no control.

Several possibilities were explored. One was to join the Peoria School District #150. This would mean annexation to the City of Peoria, since this was required by the District #150 Charter. Other alternatives were to annex to Elmwood High School District, eighteen miles away, or to Glasford, sixteen miles distant. Neither of these small schools could accommodate the 570 students that would be added to its student body. The only other alternative was for District #310 to build and operate a high school of its own.

Representatives of the Kickapoo, Limestone, and Hollis Townships met at Monroe School on April 14, 1948, to discuss the possibility of organizing a community high school district to serve these townships. George Yingst was selected as temporary chairman and Eugene Leiter was appointed to act as temporary secretary of the meeting. A committee was appointed to secure signatures on the necessary petitions to organize a community high school: Richard Gray, Bellevue; William H. Fahnstock, Bartonville; Leonard Lumberry, Pleasant Valley; Donald Cameron, North Limestone; Glendon Sharp, Oak Grove; George Yingst, Monroe; and John J. Johnson, from Pottstown.

The next meeting was held at Monroe School on April 20, 1948, to discuss the territory to be included in the proposed district. Donald Cameron moved that Attorney Eugene Leiter prepare the necessary petitions to organize the community high school district, according to the boundary lines indicated on the map. George Yingst presided at this meeting of representatives of the various school boards of the common school district within the Limestone, Kickapoo, and Hollis Townships. Earl E. Downing, County Superintendent of Schools explained the conditions in the district, including calling elections and the difficulty of paying non-high school district taxes.

It was decided that an election

would be held on Saturday, February 5, 1949, with polling places in the schools at Pottstown, Norwood, Bellevue, Monroe, Bartonville, and Wheeler. On March 14, 1949, the Board of Education of Community High School District #310 met in the office of the County Superintendent of Schools. At this meeting, William A. Helmer was elected president and Harold Mandler was elected secretary. Other terms of office of the members were designated by casting lots: one-year term, Donald Cameron and Harold Mandler; two-year terms, William Helmer and Edward Vickery; three-year term, Richard Gray. G. R. Ojemann, Limestone Township Treasurer, was appointed treasurer of High School District #310.

On June 20, 1949, a meeting was held at Bellevue School for the purpose of obtaining land to build a new high school and, on June 17, 1950, an election was held to choose a site and issue bonds for the new high school. The Stohl site was selected by majority vote.

On March 22, 1952, Mr. Murray was offered a two-year contract for the position of school superintendent. The board election was held on April 4, 1952, with Mr. Gray, Mr. Shoff, Mr. Haynes, Mr. Ekstrum, Mr. McCowan, Mr. Cameron, and Mr. Helmer elected.

C. Iber and Sons were contractors for the first high school. School opened October 14, 1953. Outside

flood lighting was donated by Leiter Electric Company on July 20, 1954, and Leiter Electric Company completed work for the athletic field.

The school became part of the Village of Bartonville as a result of annexation proceedings completed in June of 1957. In December, 1957, discussions were held for the future expansion of the school.

On January 9, 1958, plans were made to start proceedings for an addition to the present school, with a tentative vote set for October 4, 1958, and completion set for June, 1960. Representatives from Gregg and Briggs and the architectural firm of Hewitt and Bastian were invited to attend the regular board meeting.

Limestone High School is now in the midst of another proposed expansion. Referenda were held in late 1975 and February, 1976, to authorize expanding and remodeling the present facilities at a cost of \$5 million. Both were defeated.

### ***Peoria State Hospital***

The Illinois Asylum for the Incurably Insane, the Illinois General Hospital for the Insane, the Bartonville State Hospital, and, finally, the Peoria State Hospital are the names this institution has borne during its existence. The first was entirely proper because it was the outgrowth of the movement looking toward the removal of the incurables from the poorhouses to which they had been

sent from the state asylums, until their number approached 3,000.

Peoria was the logical location for the institution, inasmuch as the movement was led by Clara Parsons Bourland, sponsored by the Peoria Women's Club, and liberally backed by kindred organizations throughout the state.

Property was purchased from Aquilla Moffatt, J. M. Scholl, M. A. Barton, J. B. Barton, J. Scholl, and H. S. Barton in 1895 and 1896 to be used for the Illinois Asylum for the Incurable Insane. The first building, a foreboding fortress with battlements and turrets, was erected on the brow of the hill in 1895, completed in 1897, never occupied, and razed in 1897. The building, although a magnificent example of medieval architecture, was wholly unsuited to the purpose it was to serve. Before its completion, the walls showed wide cracks and it was found that it had been built over an abandoned coal mine. The cracks were ascribed to a caving-in of the old drifts.

Governor John R. Tanner came into office soon after and called to his aid Dr. Frederick H. Wines. Dr. Wines had visited the institutions of Europe and brought back with him the idea of the cottage plan, just then taking form. He discarded all previous plans and started the program which resulted in forty distinct buildings at Bartonville.

The name "Incurably Insane" seemed harsh as hospitalization was coming more into the foreground



*Peoria State Hospital Courtesy Peoria Journal Star*

and, in 1907, the name was changed to the Illinois General Hospital for the Insane. In 1909, the state hospitals dropped the word "insane" and assumed the name of the city in which the institution was located. This facility became known as "Bartonville State Hospital".

Just before the bill was signed, it was found that Bartonville had neither a railroad station or express office, so the name of the larger city, Peoria, was substituted in order to more accurately fix its location. Thus, the institution became Peoria State Hospital.

The institution grew faster than any of its kind in the state. New cottages were built and additional land was purchased from Edgar Morse in

April, 1909, and from others as land was needed. Two detached farm colonies, accommodating seventy-five patients, contributed to the support of their fellow inmates. They provided gallons of milk each day from the dairy herd, and there were four hundred hogs constantly on hand to consume the waste of the dining rooms. The inmates canned tomatoes, put up barrels of sauerkraut, planted sweet corn and other vegetables, and constantly provided the institution with food.

The cottage plan, with unlocked doors and unbarred windows and free access to the public, quickly changed the popular concept of an asylum. Peoria State Hospital was the pioneer in the total abolition of every



*Peoria State Hospital courtesy Peoria Journal Star*

kind of mechanical and medical restraint.

Between 1927 and 1938, Peoria State Hospital grew, and, in November of 1938, it dedicated a new \$300,000 diagnostic center to Dr. Zeller, who had managed the institution for twenty-nine years. The center gave the patients complete facilities, such as dental, X-ray, operating rooms, psychotherapy, fever and shock treatments, and clinical and pathological laboratories. At that time, Dr. J. A. Campbell was appointed president. In 1938, Peoria State Hospital was one of seven state hospitals to receive an iron lung for the treatment of infantile paralysis.

In October, 1951, Abbott Children's Center was opened and 36

boys and girls, who had been confined in mental institutions with mentally-ill adults, were brought to live in a bright, child-oriented building. This was the first children's mental institution in Illinois, and it was set up at no additional cost to the taxpayer.

Peoria State Hospital was also the first state hospital to open an alcoholic ward serving both males and females. On October 4, 1959, the ward opened with six patients and, within five years, had served an estimated 5,000 patients.

An auditorium was built at the hospital, and the ladies were provided with a beauty shop.

With the building of Zeller Zone Center in 1965, Peoria State Hospi-



*Peoria State Hospital*

tal's patients and staff began to decline. Although statements were made at the time that duplication of services would be avoided, the phasing out of the hospital began with the closing of Abbott Center. The facilities served the children's needs until August, 1967, when officials claimed it would take \$37,000.00 to rehabilitate the two-story red brick building and an additional \$8,750.00 to replace furniture and equipment. The children were sent to the newly-opened Zeller Center on University Avenue in Peoria, and Abbott Center became Alpha Park.

In 1972, Governor Richard Ogilvie announced plans to close the nearly 100-year-old institution. During that year, three patients had died, one from a beating and two due to medi-

cal neglect. The hospital had lost many of its dedicated staff members and was operating with foreign-educated, limited-licensed physicians.

In May of 1973, Governor Daniel Walker announced that Peoria State would undergo a seven-month program of transferring 545 patients and 555 employees to other facilities and would close by the end of that year.

On Thursday, December 13, 1973, Peoria State Hospital became virtually a ghost city. Nineteen geriatric patients, the last group to leave, were transferred to Galesburg. It took only seven months to phase out a hospital which was opened in 1902 and, at the time, was the most modern and complete facility of its type in the nation.

# CHAPTER 6

## *Recreation and Transportation*

### *Transportation*

The earliest transportation in Bartonville was horses or horse-drawn vehicles which continued well into the twentieth century. In 1900, the Peoria Terminal Railroad began serving Bartonville. The Peoria terminal was at Walnut and Washington Streets in Peoria, with tracks proceeding to Bartonville and on to Pekin, with stops at Allied Mills, Tuscara, and Hollis. The Bartonville depot was called "Collier Station" and was located on Depot Street near Keystone. The Peoria Terminal was an electric trolley-type of train and went out of business in 1924.

The Chicago and Northwestern Railroad came through Bartonville in 1912. It did not offer passenger service, but continues to offer freight

service to local industries.

Prior to the formation of the Bartonville Bus Company in 1920, some jitneys were operating between Bartonville and the south side of Peoria. W. W. Barton founded the bus line which ran from the Peoria Bus Terminal at Jefferson and Hamilton Streets in Peoria through Bartonville to Pekin and returning. This service continued until 1950 when the company was dissolved following a labor dispute. The franchise was assumed by Illinois Highway Lines, which served for a number of years.

At the present time, there is no public transportation serving Bartonville. However, the village is close to the Greater Peoria Airport and will have easy access to the interstate highway system via the new Interstate 474.



*Schmidt's Park*

### **Parks and Recreation**

There have been parks and recreational areas in Bartonville since the early years. Barton's Grove was probably the first. It was given this name because there was a large grove of walnut trees on the property. It was located on the Adams Street grade between Bartonville and Peoria and included a ball diamond and possibly some picnic areas.

Terminal Park was another early park. It was located in the vicinity of McKinley Street where the pond is now located on Keystone property and had a roller coaster ride which ended with a landing in the pond. The name was probably derived from its proximity to the Terminal

Railroad Depot. Another privately-owned park near Bartonville was Schmidt's Park located at Dutch Hill.

Bartonville's first public park was donated by Mayor and Mrs. Wilbur Lauterbach and Mr. and Mrs. B. E. Mohn. The Lauterbachs donated eighteen acres and the Mohns, ten acres, on Smithville Road. The park was named Clara A. Lauterbach Park in honor of the mayor's mother, Mrs. Clara A. Cornelius Lauterbach. The park has tennis courts, picnic shelters, stoves, restrooms, and playground equipment. The remainder of the park is undeveloped wooded hills and valleys.

The largest addition to Bartonville's park system came when the State of Illinois leased to the village



*Alpha Park Library*



*Clara Lauterbach Park*

about 90 acres of land formerly used as farm land and later as Abbott Center. Many useful buildings came with the Alpha Park site. The classroom building was converted to use for community gatherings, such as wedding receptions and dances. Some of the old dairy barns have been used for storage of Civil Defense vehicles. Another area is used as a pistol range for the police department. The large brick dormitory building is occupied by the newly-created Alpha Park Public Library District, which was established by voter referendum. Some of the older farm buildings have been demolished. Alpha Park has three baseball

diamonds, tennis courts, and picnic areas. The Firemen's Annual Fish Fry is held at Alpha Park two days each August. Much of the acreage is undeveloped, but it has been suggested that a nine-hole golf course be added to the park's recreational facilities.

Alpha Park is headquarters for Bartonville Civil Defense. Civil Defense occupies the entire basement of the library building, which has been converted to a communications room, storage facilities, and a kitchen to be used during the long hours the men are on duty during tornadoes or other disasters.

# CHAPTER 7

## *Catastrophes*

### *Catastrophes*

Human suffering has always been one of the sad things of life. In addition to all the small personal tragedies suffered by nearly every family everywhere, Bartonville has had some that involved the entire community.

In the early days, the mines were a constant cause of accidents. Underground mining has always been an inherently dangerous occupation, and most families whose breadwinners were miners suffered losses due to cave-ins, explosions, or asphyxiation at one time or another. Aside from the mining accidents, the sinking of the steamboat "Columbia" was the first large-scale disaster.

The "Columbia" began its last voyage on July 5, 1918, at Kingston Mines, at 7:30 p.m. It stopped in Pekin at 8:15 p.m. to pick up passen-

gers. Al Fresco Park in Peoria was the destination before returning again downstream later the same night. On the return trip, the passengers were enjoying dancing to a live orchestra. At the height of the frivolity, the steamboat struck a submerged stump. The consequences were immediate and devastating. The boat settled on the river bottom partially on its side. Many terrified passengers were thrown or washed overboard. The nearly 500 passengers on the voyage could not be accommodated in the lifeboats. The accident had occurred at midnight, and, by the next morning, 87 people had drowned. It took four days to account for all the people, both dead and survivors. A special train was dispatched by the P & PU Railroad to move all the injured to Pekin and Peoria Hospitals

from the Wesley Road disaster site. Some Bartonville old-timers tell of walking through the bottoms to the river to view the sunken "Columbia" as it lay crumpled in the river across from Bartonville.

The forerunner of the present Allied Mills was the Marsden Company, which manufactured cellulose from cornstalks. This company was re-organized in 1905 and became the American Milling Company. One New Year's Day, 1919, a fire broke out, completely destroying the mill. Even though the fire department gave its best efforts, the spectacular fire burned for several days and the building was a total loss. The present plant was constructed soon after the fire.

On the morning of Wednesday, February 20, 1929, a 6:40 a.m. train of the newly-formed Peoria & Hanna City Railroad was taking two hundred miners to work in the La-Marsh district mines. As the train approached Hollis, the rails suddenly spread, causing four coaches on the rear of the train to plunge over the embankment. A fire broke out and was extinguished quickly by some of the un-injured people, but not before some suffered burns. Help was dispatched from Bartonville and Peoria. Many of the injured were taken to hospitals in cars that stopped along the highway before the ambulances arrived. A huge crowd gathered; many of them were the miners' families. At least 150 men were injured in

the wreck and six died. Two Bartonville men, William Brown and Charles Luthy, were among them. Brown was crushed to death while trying to jump from the train, and Mr. Luthy died a few hours later in Proctor Hospital. The cause of the wreck was blamed on a broken "fish plate", which allowed the rails to spread apart, causing the wheels of the coaches to bounce along on the railroad ties. As the brakes were applied, the coaches left the track, turning over several times.

The H. E. Lauterbach Lumber Company had been in business in Bartonville since 1903. On Monday, September 18, 1961, the firm was suddenly struck by fire at 3:40 p.m. The fire apparently started in a lumber shed at the northeast corner of the yards. Bartonville Fire Department, which is only two blocks away, was summoned and arrived in a few minutes, but the fire was already out of control. Additional units were summoned from Limestone, Pekin, Richwoods, Timber-Hollis, and Glasford. By then, the lumber yard was clearly a total loss and the firemen concentrated their efforts on containing the blaze and keeping it from spreading to adjacent homes and businesses. By 5:00 p.m., little was left except the new millwork building; the rest was smoldering ruin. Two employees, Herman Meardy and Art Hattermann, were burned, but, fortunately, no lives were lost. A bird carrying a lighted



*Train Wreck Feb. 20, 1929*



*H. E. Lauterbach Lumber Co. fire*

cigarette was blamed for starting the fire. Wilbur Lauterbach, president of the corporation, said no electrical lines were in the building, but nesting birds were always a problem. The firm continued on Washington Street for a number of years until it was dissolved in 1974.

The latest disaster occurred on June 22, 1974. Following a heavy rain, the Kickapoo overflowed its banks as it had countless times. This time, the volume was greater than usual. It covered the lower downtown area with muddy swirling water. Some of the businesses suffered

water damage, but the big loser was Keystone's steel mill. The rushing waters cascaded down Washington Street, engulfing the whole steel mill under several feet of water. The company's steel-making capacity was shut down for several months, while the water was pumped out and the buildings and machinery were cleaned and repaired. The damage was well over \$1,000,000, making this the most expensive disaster in Bartonville's history. Since the flood, earthen dams and floodgates have been constructed to assure against any future occurrences.

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